If You Want To Be Perfect: Part 2
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As we begin a new series that will take us through the rest of the year, we must be cognizant to what the Holy Spirit wants to relay to us that will close the chapter of 2026. This year has been purposed to bring attention to areas of our lives that we have overlooked, ignored, or forsaken. The repetitiveness of His love throughout these series has visited and revisited what He has spoken to each of us in private. This final chapter of 2026 will give birth to the tomorrow of next year. The intimacy of His word given through 2026 will cause us to birth the promise of what He has ordained from the beginning. And now we begin this series with an invoking question. What is perfect and do you want to be perfect?

Matthew 5:48 NLT
48 But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

As we stated last week that we should not confuse the understanding of perfect as being without fault. The Biblically definition of perfect means to be complete, finish, and mature.

Luke 9:23 NLT
23 Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.

You may recall that last week that we mentioned something similar to this effect. We read from Luke 14, “If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life.

As Jesus was addressing the multitude around Him, we must realize that Jesus was also addressing the disciples. Everything that comes from Him heart is intended for every one with ears to hear. Every word is an invitation to come closer to God.

Then what is the difference between a follower and a disciple? These two words are used interchangeably throughout scripture. They both mean a pupil, or adherent of a

teacher or religious leader. The disciples were already following Jesus but the crowd was given an invitation to follow. So what does this look like? Jesus said that a follower is required to give up their own way.

- Deny self: To deny oneself means to relinquish their aspirations. More specifically, denying yourself means to dethrone yourself as lord of your own life—to deny yourself of your right to live selfishly with no consideration of a purpose other than your own.

What it simply means is wanting His will more than your own. This sounds good on paper but what does this look like? I'm so glad you asked.

Luke 5:1–11 NLT
1 One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. 2 He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. 3 Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish." 5 "Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again." 6 And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! 7 A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking. 8 When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm such a sinful man." 9 For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. 10 His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed. Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" 11 And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Jesus gave Simon a taste of what it would be like to surrender his own will. Notice how Simon offered an excuse upfront. We worked hard all night and came up empty handed. Simon and Andrew worked within their own strength. And what did their own strength produce? The very same thing that we produce when we do our lives for ourselves. Image with me for a moment how this must have made these guys feel. If they worked all night then they had to be tired of disappointment after disappointment with each casting of the net. Their frustration must have been weighty knowing that no matter how hard they tried, they kept getting the same answer. Theses guys knew what they were doing. It's not like they just started fishing yesterday. They knew exactly what they were doing. And their relentlessness showed their determination.

But when Simon obeyed there became instant blessings. Matter of fact, more than he knew what to do with. His blessing overflowed into other. Jesus didn't ask him to do the impossible. Jesus only asked Simon to do what didn't seem to be logical to him. Jesus asked Simon to deny himself.

Perfection begins with Relinquishment

We're not talking about things that are just being introduced to you…we are repeating a truth that will cause us to be perfect. Perfect in the Fathers eyes! Perfections begins with our surrender.

Surrender does not erase our aspirations. Surrender refocuses, recenters and reorients our aspirations. Luke 14:26 "26 "If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple."

This is no different than the Rich Ruler that we spoke about last week. Jesus said the very thing he lacked was surrender. We can keep all the other commandments but if we neglect to surrender then we will be stuck in the cycle of deception.

Back to Simon Peter, when he realized that obedience to what sounded foolish produced what they were not able to do in their own strength, he became humble. And humility produces surrender. Surrender will show us our position spiritually. And look how Jesus replies in Matthew 4:19-20

Matthew 4:19–20 NLT
19 Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" 20 And they left their nets at once and followed him.

To follow they had to abandon. But notice how Jesus refocused, recentered, and reoriented what they knew how to do in the physical.

Matthew 9:9 NLT
9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

What do we know about this person called Matthew. Other Gospels call him Levi. So what does that tell us? Levi and Matthew are the same person. Levi's name was changed to Matthew. And most of us know that Matthew was a tax collector. If we could look at it from the eyes of a Hebrew then Matthew was no different that a Roman. But in Matthews case he was a Hebrew that denied his linage but the things he did. He had literally turned his back on his own people but yet Jesus invited him to follow Him. What is so appealing in this situation with Matthew as well as the other disciples is that the student always sought out the rabbi to be his student. But with Jesus, He is the one calling us to follow.

Anyone that desired and became a student knew that they were subject to their teachers authority. So why do we see so many "Christians" kicking against the pricks. Why does God have to constantly repeat himself over and over with the very things that we should already know that we were to abandoned. Becoming a disciple comes with a cost and the cost is the cross. Denying yourself and adopting the mission of God.

John 1:43–50 NLT
43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him,
"Come, follow me." 44 Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown. 45
Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses
and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth."
46 "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"
"Come and see for yourself," Philip replied. 47 As they approached, Jesus said, "Now
here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity." 48 "How do you know
about me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before
Philip found you." 49 Then Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the
King of Israel!" 50 Jesus asked him, "Do you believe this just because I told you I had
seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this."

Now we are sitting at 6 of the 12 disciples that followed Jesus. Each one at some point in their crossing paths with Jesus was given an invitation to follow. And each one accepted knowing what that would intel. But now let's find out when we fail to stay surrender to the purpose of Jesus.

John 12:4–6 NLT
4 But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, 5 "That perfume
was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor."
6 Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the
disciples' money, he often stole some for himself.

Luke 22:3–6 NLT
3 Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples, 4 and he went to the leading priests and captains of the Temple guard to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. 5 They were delighted, and they promised to give him money. 6 So he agreed and began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him when the crowds weren't around.

Matthew 26:14–16 NLT
14 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests 15 and asked, "How much will you pay me to betray Jesus to you?" And they gave him thirty pieces of silver. 16 From that time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

John 13:27 NLT
27 When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, "Hurry and do what you're going to do."

Judas will forever be remembered as the betrayer of Jesus. But that is not who he was when Jesus called him to follow. Jesus entrusted Judas to be the treasurer. This means that without the finances being intact that ministry would not happen in a proficient manner. This is a huge responsibility to put on someone if they are not surrendered. Jesus also sent him out just like the rest of the disciples to preach the Kingdom of God, heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Half hearted people don't do this kind of Kingdom word.

Judas' downfall was not keeping his heart surrendered. He came up with his own agenda and this caused his heart to turn. He fell away from grace. And many people in the church that label themselves as "Christians" are in danger of taking on this same deceptive spirit. We must surrender and remain surrender. So many times Jesus emphasized to remain in Him and He would remain in you. Ask yourself these two questions. Have I truly surrendered and am I still surrendered.

You have been given the word of God that will help you answer these two question and if either one of them are questionable then we must fall back to what Jesus said.

Luke 9:23 NLT
23 Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.

Denying self, take up cross daily, and follow Him!

Let me pray with you today!